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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AND SRSG EIDE AGREE ON NEXT STEPS ON
SHINDAND

Classified By: Ambassador William Wood, for reasons 1.4(a), (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In their September 2 meeting, SRSG Eide told the Ambassador that he had concluded that a joint investigation would end in the parties not agreeing on conclusions. A joint investigation without an agreed conclusion would be more harmful than no investigation at all. The internationals and the Afghan government had to focus on the future. Eide had spoken to NATO SYG de Hoop Schaefer, who concurred with Eide's assessment and recommendation against a joint investigation. Eide would confer with Karzai later that day.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador told Eide the United States agreed a focus on the future was important, but a decision not to conduct the joint inquiry would leave a number of challenges for all parties to address. The Afghan government, the UN and the Coalition Forces cannot operate independently if/when the next such incident occurs. The separate and different responses on Shindand locked people in antagonistic positions, in a public way.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador suggested the three parties share information, outside a formal, joint investigation, with no requirement to achieve a joint conclusion. Later that day, Eide sent his military advisor and several human rights workers to a previously scheduled information exchange session involving ISAF, Afghan officials and the UN.

¶4. (C) On improving coordination, the Ambassador and Eide agreed to try to accelerate consultations and eventually conclusions, while preventing premature assertions. The Ambassador told Eide that a US-GOA dialogue on civilian casualties would begin during an upcoming Secretary of Defense visit and the Strategic Partnership talks. The United States would resist any formal discussion of the authority and responsibility of international forces, and would instead focus on practical cooperation. The Ambassador recommended to Eide that he stay away from this issue, including any thoughts of a code of conduct.8 Eide agreed.
WOOD